



Methanol Institute Expresses Concern with REACH Annex XV Restriction on Methanol in Windshield Wash Fluid

A restriction on methanol in consumer windshield wash fluid will have a direct financial impact on consumers across Europe

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, November 28, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Methanol Institute (MI) is the trade association representing the global methanol industry and shares European Union (EU) concerns relating to surrogate alcohol use and methanol poisonings. However, MI strongly believes the recent passage by the European Commission's (EC) REACH Committee of a restriction on methanol in windshield wash fluid (WWF) is not the best way to address those concerns.

On 25 October 2017, a restriction proposed by Poland on methanol in consumer WWF was narrowly passed by the REACH Committee through the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. Our understanding is that the restriction only received 68% of the vote compared to the 65% threshold needed for qualified majority. The restriction aims to prevent poisonings from the illegal consumption of WWF by chronic alcoholics seeking surrogate alcohol in a few Member States. As this is a localized and not a EU-wide problem, MI believes that there are more effective ways to address the situation than a EU-wide restriction.

MI CEO Gregory Dolan noted that "A more effective and appropriate response to concerns around windshield was fluid ingestion would be based on the development of national strategies to increase consumer education, increase social awareness, provide more vigilant enforcement, involve the targeted use of bitterants and, where applicable, the implementation of national legislation." Dolan also noted that, "MI has developed a wide-array of methanol health and safety materials which we are happy to share with all relevant authorities and stakeholders and can be found on our website at www.methanol.org."

A restriction on methanol in consumer WWF will have a direct financial impact on consumers across Europe, despite the fact that the circumstances the restriction seeks to address are limited and isolated to a small number of Member States, including Poland, which has shown that reinstating its national restriction has been effective in addressing the problem. Additionally, a ban on methanol in WWF risks promulgating surrogate alcohol use across Europe, as evidence indicates that the presence of methanol in WWF acts as the primary deterrent for illegal consumption of ethanol containing WWF.

MI urges the Council of Ministers and European Parliament to reject the Commission regulation on the basis that it is not justified based on the EC treaty principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. MI believes that the evidence shows both that there is no clearly demonstrated 'need' for an EU-wide solution to an isolated problem that can be effectively addressed at the national level, and that, in accordance with two socio-economic analyses performed, the increased annual costs of such a measure far outweigh any projected societal health benefits.

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